

A Fulfilled Christian Life, Part 10 - Romans 12:13 – February 10th, 2013

- Today's teaching will be part ten of a series titled; "A Fulfilled Christian Life."
 - Up to this point, the Apostle Paul, by the Holy Spirit has ever so brilliantly gone from the "how" of a fulfilled Christian life to the "what."
 - Verses 1-8 show us how we can live a fulfilled life in Christ, while verses 9-21 show us what that fulfilled life in Christ will actually look like.
 - However, knowing how to live a fulfilled Christian life and what living a fulfilled Christian life will look like, are both insufficient to change me.
 - The reason they are both insufficient is because only the "why" will motivate me, and enable me, to want to know "how" and to do "what."
 - To me this is why, in the remainder of chapter, Paul has seemingly taken the posture of presenting a series of staccato style sentences.
 - By that I mean, verses 9-21, consist of a series of short verses with a list of numerous exhortations concerning practical Christian living.
 - So much so that it requires the reader of the Epistle to understand the "why" behind the "what" the Holy Spirit inspires the Apostle to write.
 - In other words, we would err greatly were we to merely study "what" Paul writes, and not fully understand "why" it is that the Paul writes it.
 - Here's "why," the reason "why" he writes what he writes is the Holy Spirit wants us to make the decision to make the changes in our lives.
 - I'll take it a step further and suggest to you that God doesn't have permission to change our hearts until we have changed our minds first.
 - Let me explain, we're told in verse two of this chapter that it proves God's perfect will is that I be transformed by the renewing of my mind.
 - This implies that God won't force me to live the life that He wants me to live, this because He has given me the sovereignty of my free will.
 - This is why He won't make the decision for me, apart from me, instead of me, so as to transform me, which in turn will utterly change me.
 - I'm of the belief that the common denominator in these staccato style sentences is that they're all reasons why we should want to change.
 - Actually, this explains why it is that I can know what God's Word says, and how to do what God's Word says and yet never change my life.
 - Sadly, I never experience the life that Jesus came to give, that joy filled and fulfilled life more abundantly, to the fullest, above and beyond.
- John 10:10b NKJV ...I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.**
- I want to draw your attention to these two words; "more abundantly." They carry with it the idea of being exceedingly abundantly above.
 - Superabundant, above and beyond any measure, by implication, excessive, even giving more and more to us, in the living of our lives.
 - Again, this is the reason "why" I will want the life that Jesus came to give me according to the riches of His glory through the Holy Spirit.
- Ephesians 3:14-21 NKJV** For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, (15) from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, (16) that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, (17) that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, (18) may be able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the width and length and depth and height— (19) to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. (20) Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, (21) to Him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.
- With this understanding we're better prepared to tackle the text that's before us this morning, given that we know the why behind the what.
 - More specifically, the reason "why" I do "what" verses 1-8 say to do, i.e., dying to self, is that I want "what" verses 9-21 say that I can have.
 - That said let's quickly revisit the first three we found in just verse twelve alone, beginning with the first one, in the first part of verse twelve.
- 1. Joy in Hope (Verse 12a)**
- Here Paul writes that we can have joy in hope, in the sense that the joy of our salvation comes packaged with the hope of our redemption.
- 2. Perseverance in Affliction (Verse 12b)**
- Then in the second part of verse twelve, Paul says that we can be patient in affliction, or perhaps better said, be persevering in affliction.
- 3. Persistence in Prayer (Verse 12c)**
- Paul now sort of wraps the bow around this magnificent verse saying we can be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, and persistent in prayer.
- 4. Giving in Hospitality (Verse 13)**
- (13) Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.
- Here Paul says in effect, we can have a fulfilled Christian life that shares with God's people in need, by the practicing of our hospitality.
 - Some translations render this as "given to hospitality," which sort of carries with it the idea of one being prone to it, or likely to be giving it.
 - Notice how that there seems to be two sides to this, in that sharing, or distributing, seems to imply going out, while practicing is inviting in.
 - The reason I point this out is because it's both that will characterize one who is given to hospitality, such that both come from an overflow.
 - Let me explain, I can't impart that which I do not possess, namely, giving and sharing hospitably with those who are in need, even strangers.
 - In other words, if I'm empty and needy myself as opposed to being fulfilled and with no need for myself, then I have nothing to give another.
 - The truth of the matter is that I could never hope to give to God's people, or be hospitable to God's people, absent a fulfilled life in Christ.
 - Oh and by the way, like with the all the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit, you can't manufacture this, or fake this, or it will be plastic fruit.
 - As one said, "faking hospitality would be a kin to making people feel that they were at home, all the while in your heart wishing they were."
 - Being that I don't wish to end on such a note, I'll simply bring the sermon to a close with what I believe should seal the deal for all of us.
 - Here's what I'm thinking, if it's more blessed to give than to receive, then shouldn't that be reason enough as to "why" we would want this.
 - The bottom line is, this is how God has wired us, if you will. It's also "why" we derive so much fulfillment in our lives when we practice it.